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SUBJECT: "Canning Chicken or Rabbit." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

A friend of mine told me the other day that she was trying to decide what to do with some non-paying boarders out on her farm -- boarders she couldn't afford to feed for nothing during the coming winter. Naturally, I wanted to know who these boarders were. She said some of them Hens that weren't laying enough to pay their keep and some of them were rabbits.

Well, turn and turn about is fair play, isn't it? Seems to me if those chickens and rabbits are good sports, they ought to be willing to change about now and become food for the family instead of boarders. The older ones would do well to take up winter residence on the pantry shelf, canned. The younger, tender rabbits and the broilers in the poultry flock are the ones to use fresh this fall when the city relatives come for Sunday dinner. If you don't want to put up chicken this early in the fall, At least now is a good time to send for reliable canning directions. The Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C. is glad to send you a mimeographed sheet of directions for canning chicken or other meat.

Of course, you can can either young or older chickens or young or older rabbits. But you'll find that the plump, well-fed hens, two years old or so, have a better texture and flavor when they're canned than six-months old chickens. The same fact is true of rabbits. Very tender young meat naturally requires very little cooking to be at its best in flavor and texture. If you cook it a long time at high heat, it just isn't so good. That's what often happens if you can very young meat. It's likely to have an overdone taste and to cook to pieces. You see, no matter what the age of the meat, whether it is young and tender, or old and not so tender, it takes thessame amount of processing for sterilization.

Of course, you know that rabbit meat is much like chicken. So when you can rabbit, you'll use the same methods as when you can chicken.

Let's take a few minutes now to run over some of the important points in canning either of these two meats. Important point number one is: Can only under steam pressure. If you want to put up either rabbit or chicken, you need to do it in a steam pressure cooker. If you havn't such a cooker, beg, borrow, or buy one -- or else don't can the meat. A hot water bath won't do. The hot water isn't hot enough to sterilize the meat, to insure safety from spoilage.

Important point number two. Use small containers for canning the meat -- pint glass jars or number 2 or 2 1/2 tin cans. The heat can penetrate the small containers much more easily than larger ones.

Important point number three. Cut the meat in pieces of a convenient size for serving. Remove all surplus fat. Never use flour or meal with the chicken or anything else that makes heat penetration more difficult.

Important point number four. Pre-heat the meat thoroughly before you pack it in the jars, but don't try to Cook it thoroughly. It will get plenty of cooking during processing in the pressure cooker. The idea is to preheat it just until no red color shows and then to pack it hot into hot jars and process it at once.

Important point number five. Pack the meat loosely. Avoid cramming it down in the jar. Leave plenty of space for the broth to circulate around the meat.

There are five important points about canning chicken or rabbit. The whole idea, you see, is to aid heat penetration in every possible way, yet to keep the best flavor and texture in the canned meat.

Now a point or two about preparing the chicken for canning. You fix it just as you would for cooking -- pick, singe, remove the pin feathers, wash and cut it into the usual pieces for serving. Clean it thoroughly. If you happen to break the gall bladder, don't can that chicken. It will have a disagreeable flavor. And don't try to can the lungs, kidneys, eggs or liver. If you like, you can use the gizzard or the heart. Trim off any large pieces of fat and cut the white meat in large pieces from the breast bone and sholders. Leave the meat on the bones in the other pieces. When you pack the containers, put at least one piece with bone in each jar. The bony parts like the back, neck and foot, you'll skin and use for making the hot broth to fill up the jars after the meat is packed in.

Some people like to pack all white meat in one jar and all dark meat in another. Some people like to mix them. Take your choice. Of course, if you're canning rabbit, you'll avoid this problem, since rabbit is all white.

Well, here are just a few of the details of canning your surplus chicken or rabbit to aid the family food supply. As I said, if you want information on thecomplete process from first to last, write your State College or write direct to the Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C. The canning specialists at the Bureau are always glad to help you with any food conservation problem.

Monday: "Some Facts about Fat."